MARVEL
PG 17

EXILES™

His name is Dr. Curtis Connors. A brilliant surgeon who lost his arm to a war wound.

His career at an end, he turned his sizable intellect towards research.

Connors' area of interest...

He had hopes of tapping into that process and making himself whole again.

Reptiles.

With a specific focus on understanding the regenerative properties reptiles possess.

He succeeded.

It was a personal and professional triumph. Millions would benefit from his discovery.

Millions would know the joy Curtis Connors now felt.

His celebration was short-lived.

The mutagenic qualities of the serum did not end with merely regenerating his missing limb.

It transformed him into a human-like **lizard.**

Connors had become a hybrid of humanity and the **long dead** reptilian DNA that lay dormant in all of us.

Oddly, the creature was not without intelligence...

...or **desire.**

Perhaps it was just instinct.

Much would be hypothesized as to what the motives were of the original Lizard.

Did he transform his wife into a creature like himself out of maliciousness? Loneliness?

And why did he infect the innocent family who lived next door?

Or the entire neighborhood?

Did he know that these new hybrids would have the ability to breed?

Was he aware that females could lay up to thirty eggs every month?

It matters very little now.

That was ten years ago.

Ten years before the entire west coast of the continental United States had become the sole property of the Lizards.

To state the obvious, the Lizards were a problem from the very beginning, but no one would have guessed how rapidly their numbers would swell.

It seemed that with each new generation, they became less human. Compromise was never an option.

By the time a full-scale military strike was deployed, it was too late. The Lizards were overunning the coastline.

Dozens of major cities were toppled, the death toll rose to nearly three quarters of a million people...

...and two presidencies crumbled.

In the end, the only solution was containment...

...and that's why they built The Wall.

WILD LIFE RESERVE

JUDD WINICK SCRIBE • J. CALAFIORE PENCILS • ERIC CANNON INKS
TRANSPARENCY DIGITAL COLORS • PAUL TUTRONE LETTERS
MIKE McKONE COVER • NOVA REN SUMA ASSISTANT
MIKE RAICHT EDITOR • MIKE MARTS TIMEBROKER
JOE QUESADA CHIEF • BILL JEMAS PRESIDENT

SOMEWHERE IN CALIFORNIA...

Not that any of this really matters to the Exiles at the moment.

They were thrown together from different realities to attempt to set right the broken timelines of alternate worlds.

Their continued success will secure each of them a safe return to their true homes.

Does that e#$% Tallus say why it dropped us smack dab in the *middle* of the *iguana* equivalent of *Mardi Gras*?!

Would there have been any harm in teleporting us to a lizzie-free zone?

Today they find themselves attempting to preserve this skewed planet's reality.

Shut up, Morph!

Yeah, yeah-- shut up, Morph! Shut up, Morph!

I didn't send us to the *gator country jamboree,* Blink.

TZEEEEET

CEEOCK!

Mimic-- a little help!

Sasquatch-- *Airborne Delivery!*

Gotcha, boss!

Much thanks!

Okay, scale faces-- time for us to take our leave of you.

BLINK!

BLINK!

BLINK!

BLINK!

BLINK!

Up ya go!

BLINK!

A *bomb*? There's a bomb in here?

That's what the *Tallus* says, Sunfire. Big enough to wipe out a *huge* chunk of *California*. And with that-- destroying most of the Lizard population.

Is that such a *bad* thing, Blink?

I'm not trying to be all militaristic, but *look* at this place...

...it's *Jurassic Park* on *Crystal Meth*. Maybe someone wants to put the non-scale-covered bipeds back at the top of the food chain.

I don't know, Nocturne. I'm guessing that they've developed into a rather peaceful ecosystem. I think they're *mostly* herbivores.

This region didn't have enough animal life to sustain a carnivorous diet.

Besides, I don't smell any *carrion* in the air. And the Lizard dung doesn't have a scent of *meat*.

Wow. You can tell what folks ate by smelling their *poop* from fifty feet away? That's *quite* a talent.

If we *ever* get out of this, we should make your excrement respiring into a show and hit *Vegas*.

I don't think this act is *dinner theater* but we could give Siegfried and Roy some competition.

Any idea where this "bomb" is supposed to be?

The Tallus says that we're in *San Diego*.

The bomb is in the *Bay*.

I didn't say that at *all*, Heather. I was *merely* inquiring if you and your husband had any kind of understanding about dating *outside* of your *marriage*.

I don't know many *Canadians*, but the ones I do know are a *wild* bunch. Part-*tee* with a capital *Tee*. You ever see *Northstar* after a few Manhattans? Forget about it.

Or maybe there was a *moment* in time when you discussed how you'd *satisfy* your basic human *needs* if you were ever separated for a long period of time.

We never *discussed* it, but I'm sure I would have told Jim he would just have to get by with bad hotel cable porn.

And I'm *reasonably* sure, *Uncle Fester*, that he wouldn't have told me I could shack up with an obnoxious, shape-shifting sack of overactive hormones.

Well, *no*, I'm sure he'd never have been *SO* specific, so you'll have to think *creatively*.

You wanna *die?*

Obviously *not*. If I wanted someone to kill me, I'd be coming on to *Mimic*.

Look. For over a year we've been getting our butts zipped around the merry-go-round of the fractured realities more than J-Lo's magnificent bum whips around the internet--

--and the ol' Morph man has had about as much action as a legless place kicker--

--if you catch my meaning

No, it was mired in subtlety.

This team is now full of chicks!

Except for me and Chuckles, the power chameleon, we've got nothing but super-powered double X chromosomes. And I was hoping for, well--

some decent snuggle time.

Snuggle time?

I was trying to be a gentleman.

Blink is with Mimic. Sunfire bats for the other team. And that leaves you. So... So... I was just asking.

A guy's not made of stone. I can be made of stone, or concrete, or most known minerals, but I was referring to my emotional state

What about me, Morph?

You don't th nk I'd make a respectable prom date?

No

I thought you were covering the rear and wouldn't hear this, Nocturne. But, once again, I'm an insensitive ass.

It's okay, Morph. You wanted to respect my "mourn ng" it's coo.

But that aside, I'd have to turn you down.

I don't date white guys.

And you are a very white guy.

HAHAHA!

Okay, fine. How about *you*, Mariko? *Again*, I'm a shape shifter. We can make it work. You like *Jennifer Aniston*, Sunfire? I can *be* Jennifer Aniston.

I'm a *shape shifter!* I can fix that!

Moron.

Don't *even* start this.

Ha e Berry! Lucy Liu! Princess Stephan e! The *Vulcan woman* from *Enterprise!*

You've got *options*, woman. Work with me.

Well, that settles it. You and me are creating a *code word.*

Any time you're thinking of kissing me, you have to say it first. That way I know it's *you* and not *Morph.*

How about *Fettucine?* You lean in to plant one on me and speak of pasta.

Sure

What's w th you?

Nothing I'm just not in the mood for this *idiocy*. You should tell Morph to keep his mouth *shut* and get his head n the game

Really?

Well, we have a ong walk eft since go ng airborne brings on those flying Pterodactyl types Morph lightens the mood

Wasn't it *you* who taught me when to et everyone blow off steam? "Mora e s as important to a successful team as any attack strategy."

Yeah, I suppose.

Cal.

What is it? What's *with* you? You ve been in a funk for weeks

It s noth ng

Nothing. Fine. It's noth ng

We *will* talk about this later

But I'll tell you this much

--*you* are the one whose head *isn't* in the game.

Suck it up, Mimic. We need you.

Fine.

Yeah *Fine.*

SAN DIEGO BAY.

We could better locate the bomb if we had a clue. It could be *anywhere* in the Bay. I'm betting on that ship

Maybe, Mimic. I'd like for us to move in with something better than a *hunch.* We--

Wait, Blink! I think I've got something

There. Around three o'clock. There's a half-sunk *sub-marine.*

Why is that significant?

Well, it wasn't the sub that caught my eye.

It's the *rowboat* tied to it. Is it me or does it seem odd that a giant lizard would paddle out there in that little tub? I think there's someone else on it.

You're probably right. I'll teleport us down to the sub and we can

SCREEECK!

HIIISSSSSZZZ!

ROAAAARRG!

Hang on! I can still port us out! We'll get down and out before they can follow us

NO!

We can't give away our location. The team can handle these lizards. That way they won't get away to alert more. You and I should hit the sub.

He's right, Blink! Go-- we can hold them off

All right! Be careful!

BLINK!

CAUTION

DIATION ARE
D REQUIRED
OR ENTRY

I can't smell *anything* but oil and rust, but someone is here.

Most of the hatches have been pried open. And I'm betting that some of these electrical systems didn't turn themselves on.

Where would the high explosives be on a vessel like this?

I'm guessing way below Torpedoes and the ike.

Then I suppose we

BLAM! BLAM! BLAM!

Listen... take a *look* at me... that gun sn t go ng to hurt me in this state So, just put it down. *Please* I don't want to hurt you...

...Dr. Connors.

Who the he are you?

We're-- um-- from *the Avengers*. We want to help get you out of here

Avengers, huh? A few new members *would* float in after ten years I guess...

You're probably right... I don't suppose this could hurt you

But if I blow up this submarine and everything in a *ten mile* radius, I'm pretty sure that would take the paint off your fenders.

I don't *want* to do that. I don't want to hurt *any more* people. I'm just four days away from putting an end to all this

Putting an end to *what?*

This *abomination* I've created. I became human again about a year ago. The *Lizards* let me live. They can still sense the *reptile* in me.

The reptile that gave *birth* to them all.

It's the *human* in me that will end this. This submarine has *nuclear strike* capabilities. I'm going to accomplish what the government is too *frightened* to attempt.

Several well placed nuclear missiles just off the coast will destroy *every* damned one of them.

Look... *Curtis*... don't do this...

...the *radiation* won't be contained. It'll spread to the human population over the border. You could kill *millions*. That isn't who you are.

You're a *Doctor*... remember... ...you're *still* a doctor....

I am... I am...

...but *look* at what I've *done*...

I *used* to... *before*.... I *saved* people, y'know. I *did*...

...what's *happened* to me... what has become of my *life*? It wasn't *supposed* to be like this.

Why? Why did this happen...

...when all I *ever* wanted to do was help?

I don't know.

But I *do* know that this won't make it *any* better.

Thank you.

Doctor, we'll escort you across to the *barrier wall*. The folks on the other side will get you the medical attention that you need.

There's only one thing I *need*.

BLAM!

Don't!!!

I... the Tallus... it says...

...it says that the timeline is *repaired*. We're... we're going to *leave*.

Good.

Cal... you did everything you could.

I *know*.

That's the problem.

BLOOOONK!

END.